

# **Southern Arizona Project to Mitigate Environmental Damages Resulting from Illegal Immigration**



## **A SUMMARY OF 2003 - 2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



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# **SOUTHERN ARIZONA PROJECT TO MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**

## **A SUMMARY OF 2003-2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **What are the “Kolbe” funds?**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has, since Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, administered special annual congressional appropriations known locally as the “Kolbe” funds which have been used for the Southern Arizona Project. These funds have been applied to lands mainly from the Tohono O’odham Nation lands east to the New Mexico border and to southwestern Arizona at the Colorado River to mitigate the impacts caused by illegal immigration and smuggling on public and adjacent lands. [See attached map.]

Detailed End-of-Year reports for this program have been issued by BLM for FY2003, FY2004 and FY2005 (titles listed below). This Summary Report addresses the project accomplishments for the fiscal years 2003 through 2005.

In 2002, at the request of Congress (and as initiated by Congressman Jim Kolbe), the Department of the Interior (DOI), U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Justice submitted a *Report to the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations on Impacts Caused by Undocumented Aliens Crossing Federal Lands in Southeast Arizona*. This report included a draft coordinated plan to mitigate damages caused by smugglers of controlled substances and undocumented aliens in southeast Arizona. Estimated needs for the first year of implementation of the draft plan total \$23.5 million and more than 90 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). The first-year estimate for BLM was \$3.8 million and 24 FTE.

In 2003, as a result of the report, the House Appropriations Committee (as initiated by Congressman Kolbe and supported by other Arizona members of the delegation) included \$1 million for BLM in the DOI and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for 2003. After conference and rescission, the final amount received was \$695,000 in March 2003. Thereafter, BLM has received these amounts (after conference and rescission) for the mitigation of impacts caused by illegal smuggling:

FY2003	\$ 695,000
FY2004	\$ 790,000
FY2005	\$ 986,000
FY2006	\$ 971,000

## What Are the Impacts from Illegal Immigration and Smuggling?

As described in the 2002 House report and in BLM end-of-year reports, the impacts are substantial, increasing in amount, and spreading. Within the borderlands zone (100 miles north of the US-Mexico border) are federal public lands including National Parks, National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, National Wildlife Refuges, BLM and National Forest public lands, Indian lands, including the Tohono O'odham Nation, and state, county and private lands---all experiencing similar impacts:

**Litter:** Thousands of acres are covered by trash. It has been estimated that each immigrant (undocumented alien “UDA”, undocumented immigrant “UDI”, or undocumented migrant “UDM”) discards at least eight pounds of trash on his/her journey through southern Arizona. This anecdotal figure feels correct to many individuals involved in removing trash. On this basis, with over 3,200,000 immigrants apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) since FY2000, almost 25,000,000 pounds of trash could have been left, 86% on federal and tribal lands in southern Arizona. Add to this the number of illegal immigrants that were not apprehended but left trash on these lands as they crossed, and we now have an understanding of the scope of the litter.

What's in the litter? And why is it discarded? Some items are obviously utilized on their trip; others, such as personal papers, are apparently discarded in haste when coyote (smuggler) pick-ups occur or USBP agents and law enforcement officers interrupt the immigrant journeys. Essentially, litter includes:

- **Containers and Bottles:** Thousands of plastic water bottles from 1-gallon size to pint size, broken glass jars, electrolyte bottles, juices, milk containers, baby bottles, soda and beer bottles (many beer bottles shot to pieces).
- **Personal Hygiene Items and Medications:** Razors, combs, brushes, shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash, soap, makeup, toothbrushes, medications, (Naproxin, Advil, Aspirin, stomach meds, electrolytes), vitamins.
- **Clothing and Shoes:** Pants, sox, underwear, shirts, hats, caps, gloves, coats; high heels, shower shoes, boots, tennis shoes, sandals and thongs.
- **Food and food cans:** food cans (tuna, beans, juices, etc), mostly from Mexico, food cans opened with a pocketknife, leaving ragged edges and torn metal lids; tortillas, baby foods; food items in American store containers and bags.
- **Jewelry:** Watches, necklaces, bracelets, knives, and key chains.
- **Paper:** Many items originate from other countries besides Mexico. Forms from maquiladore factories; airline and bus ticket stubs; phone cards, Social Security cards, identification cards; pay receipts from the US; photographs, letters, books, promissory notes, paper money; toilet paper, sanitary pads, disposable diapers.
- **Fabric and plastic:** Back packs by the hundreds; blankets, towels, table cloths, serapes, rags, rope, string, wire, lots of plastic bags used for carrying food, or large ones for use as raincoats; fanny packs, shoulder packs, wallets, and gloves.
- **Miscellaneous:** Batteries, cell phones, radios, home-made weapons
- **Human Waste:** the accumulation of disintegrating toilet paper and human feces represents both health and safety concerns and is unsightly to visitors.

**Illegal roads and trails and damaged infrastructure and improvements:**

Thousands of roads and trails are being illegally established. Illegal roads and trails fragment habitat, destroy vegetation, cause erosion and leave unsightly scars which, if not rehabilitated, will last for decades in areas which were pristine less than a decade ago. Legal roads become unusable due to illegal vehicle traffic and required law enforcement use. Paths made by thousands of feet cross sensitive areas such as archaeological sites, riparian zones and springs.

Gates are rammed and range improvements are damaged. Fences are cut, run over, left open or removed. Water tanks for cattle and wildlife are emptied of water or destroyed, adding to the critical shortage in severe drought conditions.

**Abandoned vehicles and bicycles:** Bicycles began to emerge as a significant item in 2003 and some use may stem from transporting drugs as well as humans. The Tohono O'odham Nation reports that bicycles are used at night across the reservation

Hundreds of smuggling vehicles have been abandoned and tires, batteries, gas cans and seats scattered across the landscape. Abandoned and often burned vehicles are difficult and costly to remove with great care needed to avoid further damage by the removal. Even though hundreds of vehicles have been removed, hundreds need removal.

**Campfires and escaped fires:** The impacts of warming and cooking fires by illegal immigrants cannot be overlooked in southern Arizona where the drought is a serious issue with no end in sight. Fires not only escape and destroy vegetation and wildlife habitat, and cause a safety hazard to people, but they increase the costs of suppressing fires and increase the requirements for prescriptive burns.

**Vandalism, Graffiti and Archaeological Site Damage:** New images scratched or spray painted on trees, boulders and sites sometimes mark the path and sometimes indicate time spent in passing or waiting. Historic and prehistoric sites are covered with litter, trampled or have paths cut through them.

**Who is involved in the Southern Arizona Projects?**

To complete the mitigation actions, BLM has completed assistance agreements with a wide variety of groups, agencies, counties and cities, and the Tohono O'odham Nation. Each annual report from 2003 to 2005 presents detailed accomplishments for that year with descriptions of work accompanied by photographs illustrating the landscape before and after the project work. Individual BLM field offices in southern Arizona work with adjacent agencies and groups allocating specific dollars through the agreements. Almost all federal units on the attached map have received funding or support.

Agency, Unit or Organization Funded	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06 Approximately 5% unallocated as yet
BLM Safford Field Office (FO)	\$ 15,000 *	\$ 12,000 *	\$ 12,000 *	\$ 15,000 *
BLM Tucson FO	\$ 317,000 *	\$ 282,000 *	\$ 399,000 *	\$ 318,000 *
BLM Phoenix FO	-0-	\$ 107,000	\$ 169,000 *	\$ 144,000 *
BLM Yuma FO	-0-	\$ 69,000	\$ 62,000	\$ 96,500 *
BLM AZ State Office Law Enforcement	\$ 70,000	\$ 83,000	\$ 103,000	\$ 55,000
BLM AZ State Office	\$ 85,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 9,000
Malpai Borderlands Group	\$ 90,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 0	\$ 23,500
Gila Watershed Partnership			\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000
International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA)			\$ 20,000	\$ - 0 -
National Park Service (NPS)**	\$ 20,000 FB	\$ 20,000 FB	\$ 25,000 FB \$ 16,000 CNM	\$ 16,000 CNM \$ 30,000 OP
Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)***	\$ 20,000 LSB	\$ 20,000 LSB	\$ 45,000 LSB \$ 14,000 BA	\$ 20,000 LSB \$ 14,000 BA \$ 28,000 CP
Coronado National Forest	1 project with BLM in FY03			\$ 30,000
Cochise County	\$ 43,600	\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000
Graham County	\$ 35,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -0-	\$ 10,000
Santa Cruz County	\$ 35,000			
Pima County			\$ 35,000	\$ 30,000
Town of Marana	\$ 35,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Tohono O'odham		\$ 50,000	\$ 19,000	\$ 50,000

\* Plus funding for partnerships listed below in the same column

\*\*National Park Service (NPS) units: Ft. Bowie National Historic site (FB); Coronado National Memorial (CNM); Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (OP)

\*\*\*Fish & Wildlife Service units: Leslie Canyon/San Bernardino (LSB) National Wildlife Refuge (NWF); Buenos Aires NWF (BA); Cabeza Prieta NWR (CP)

**Other Partnerships:** Additionally BLM has utilized contracted services and cooperative agreements for several youth corps groups to participate in the projects. These individuals have been the backbone of the on-the-ground accomplishments.

- Student Conservation Association (SCA)
- Youth Corps of Southern Arizona (YCOSA)  
and Community Learning Adventure Service Project (CLASP)

- Northwest Youth Corps
- Coconino Rural Environment Corps

Through volunteer agreements, significant service organizations and other volunteers have provided in-kind donations or utilized materials to remove litter, create barricades, install signs, etc:

- US Border Patrol (pilot-testing trash bags in patrol vehicles)
- Humane Borders
- Sky Island Alliance
- BorderLinks
- Audubon Research Ranch
- Southwest Open School, Durango Colorado
- Arizona Wilderness Coalition
- Southeastern Arizona Clean and Beautiful (SEACAB)
- Safford 4-H
- Girl Scout, Boy Scouts and Eagle Scout Troop
- And for the 2003 Kick-Off event: Fort Huachuca, Friends of the San Pedro, The Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, National Forest Service Sierra Vista Ranger District, Southern Arizona Bird Observatory, Upper San Pedro Partnership, USBP, SP&SW Railway, Cochise County prison crew

Some of these groups made and continue to make significant dents in the migration efforts for lands managed by BLM. Two examples:

Town of Marana: In 2003, between Oct 1 and Dec 17, the Town of Marana did a weekly cleanup every Wednesday resulting in 15,000 lbs of trash removal, 15 cubic yards of tire removal, and 1 illegal smuggling route was re-vegetated. Between January and April 2004 and July 2004, the Town's crews, removed another 26,000 lbs of trash and 15 cubic yards of tires and rehabilitated 10 illegal roads. In FY2005, the Town removed over 30,000 pounds of trash and 15 cubic yards of tires. All trash and tires were removed from the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) adjacent to the Town.

Humane Borders: in FY2005 on 12 occasions, 2 to 47 participants contributed over 720 hours picking up 155 bags of trash (estimate of 75 cubic yards) and removing these to a landfill. This group also provided substantial assistance in FY2004: on 8 occasions, 14 to 25 individuals contributed 630 hours to pick up and remove 296 bags of trash. All efforts took place at the IFNM which is 70 miles north of the US border with Mexico.

## **What are the Accomplishments of the Project?**

Litter removal: BLM and its partners vary in how trash is accounted for because of the removal methods: some count bags which are roughly ½ cubic yard when filled; some weigh trash, bags or roll-offs recording pounds and tons. The BLM ordered over \$25,000 of lime green, extra-thick trash bags. These bags are recognized at landfill sites and

charged against the deposits that BLM makes in advance. The figures below were reported in the 2003, 2004 and 2005 end-of-year reports:

	Bags	10,620 bags that have been recorded; about 5,000 cubic yards
+	Pounds	79,733 pounds weighed in at landfill sites
+	Pounds	Hundreds of other pounds that were not formally weighed
+	cubic yards	30 cubic yards of tires
+	Roll-offs	15 trash rolls offs (over 38 tons)

Conservatively, more than **250,000 pounds** of trash have been removed in 3 years, most of it picked up by hands (protected with gloves) and a great deal of that done by young crewmembers.

- Abandoned car removals: 300 removed from the BLM Phoenix Field Office (Sonoran Desert National Monument-SDNM) and another 341 removed from all southern Arizona BLM lands with law enforcement officer involvement;
- Bicycle removals: 1725 mostly from Tohono O'odham Nation (1420 being recycled through BICKAS and other routes; 325 from the SDNM being put to good use through Goodwill);
- Roads and Trail rehabilitated, removed or restored: 50 individuals routes plus 50 miles; 51 miles of road maintained or brought back to safe use;
- Sensitive area protection: two riparian areas protected by barricades but one repeatedly rebuilt in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA) after smugglers repeatedly broke through; new fencing along the Waterman Area of Critical Environmental Concern (in the IFNM) for 2 miles; and innumerable fence repairs by crews;
- Barriers and barricades: 1750 feet of guardrail along road and a short pipe rail vehicle barricade were installed;
- Native areas restored to native vegetation: 20 acres;
- Watershed restored: The Malpais Borderlands Group in southeastern Arizona placed 1950 structures, ranging from plugs to dams, to create soil stability and establish native grasses.

Additionally, the SCA and Youth Corps crews as well as other volunteers were provided protective gear for the job; the SCA received specific training including advanced first aid; communication was upgrade for field crews; and tools and supplies were provided.



## Special Border Security Details 2003-2005

Thousands of immigrants and smugglers of controlled substances and UDIs cross BLM and adjacent lands each day. In 2005, the BLM San Pedro National Conservation Area was also the site of the Minuteman Project.

For the last three years (and continuing into FY2006), BLM Arizona law enforcement has been provided with some of the “Kolbe” funding to provide security for crews completing cleanup and rehabilitation of lands and to provide emergency care to persons found in distress. Other indirect goals met were to increase the law enforcement presence in order to serve as a deterrent for undocumented immigrant and drug smuggling, prevent additional resource damage and trash dumping, and provide increased visitor and employee safety on public lands near the border.

Funding amount:	FY03 \$70,000	FY04 \$83,000	FY05 \$103,000
Details: Arizona and other BLM rangers	7/6/03 – 9/20/03 3 additional rangers assigned; worked 600 hours of overtime plus base	4/4/04 – 5/29/04 2 additional rangers	Rangers from El Central CA assisted Yuma Field Office; other AZ field offices assisted the Phoenix and Gila Districts
Base time contributed by rangers outside of southern Arizona	1,200 hours	1280 hours	-
Overtime by local (BLM AZ) rangers	800 hours	800 hours	2, 247 hours

BLM law enforcement officers include both special agents and locally-assigned rangers. Details are sanctioned assignments of officers outside their home unit.

Listed below are law enforcement statistics from special details associated with this project of mitigation for immigrant impacts (taken from Significant Activity Reports):

Statistics	FY03	FY04	FY05
Stolen Vehicles Removed	6	34	68
Vehicles Impounded tied to UDI Smuggling	53	167 UDI and Narcotic smuggling	121
Undocumented Immigrants Detained for USBP	192	1,284	597
Pounds of Marijuana Seized	6,254	2,820	924
Assaults on Ranger (by vehicle)	1	-	2
Weapons Seized	3	-	8
Backup to Assault of Border Patrol Officer	1	-	4
First Aid Provided to Injured Persons	2	-	41
Assist Recovery of UDI Exposure Fatalities	11	-	3
Prosecutions for Title 21	-	14	-

offences			
Emergency medical assistance incidents	-	137	-
Border security details	-	-	41
Search and Rescue	-	-	8

## Are these activities effective for mitigating impacts?

*“I would hate to think about what this Monument would look like without this funding. It wouldn’t look much like a National Monument. We have no other capacity to remove trash, let alone the hundreds of vehicles and bicycles.”* Gene Dahlem, Manager (retired), Sonoran Desert National Monument, October 2005

Although the yearly efforts are directed at the symptoms and not the cause of the immigration problem, we are realizing some valuable positive results. Rehabilitating illegal roads and establishing barriers work in most instances and traffic over these routes has been redirected. Secondly, we have found that a clean area is less likely to encourage littering than an area with existing concentrations of trash. Thirdly, trash removal helps with monitoring of current illegal use patterns.

Some sites that are cleaned up do remain clean when later monitored. Examples include the Siphon Canyon area of the Ft. Bowie National Historic Site as well as the Bear Springs Canyon. The NPS manager noted that after the Canyon was cleaned up, we noticed a significant decrease in UDA traffic.

Cochise County officials noted a similar situation. Monitoring at cleaned up sites along state routes showed that smaller amounts of trash are being deposited at a slower rate. The Malpai Borderlands Group commented on the “Good News” in their 2005 report: “There have been large areas that were trashed, that are now clean. Some of the areas are new trash and some are being cleaned again because of new traffic”.

SCA interns on the Sonoran Desert and Ironwood Forest National Monuments noticed that once illegal roads and paths were raked out and nature began to creep back in, these areas no longer attracted traffic and therefore were rehabilitated.

In summary, the special annual appropriations were spent directly by BLM and partners for on-the-ground activities that mitigate the impacts of illegal smuggling. Public lands are cleaner as a result of this effort.

It is also true, however, that some areas have yet to receive any attention due to the funding levels or to remoteness and steepness and the crews on the ground are just barely keeping ahead of the litter and constant damages to infrastructure.

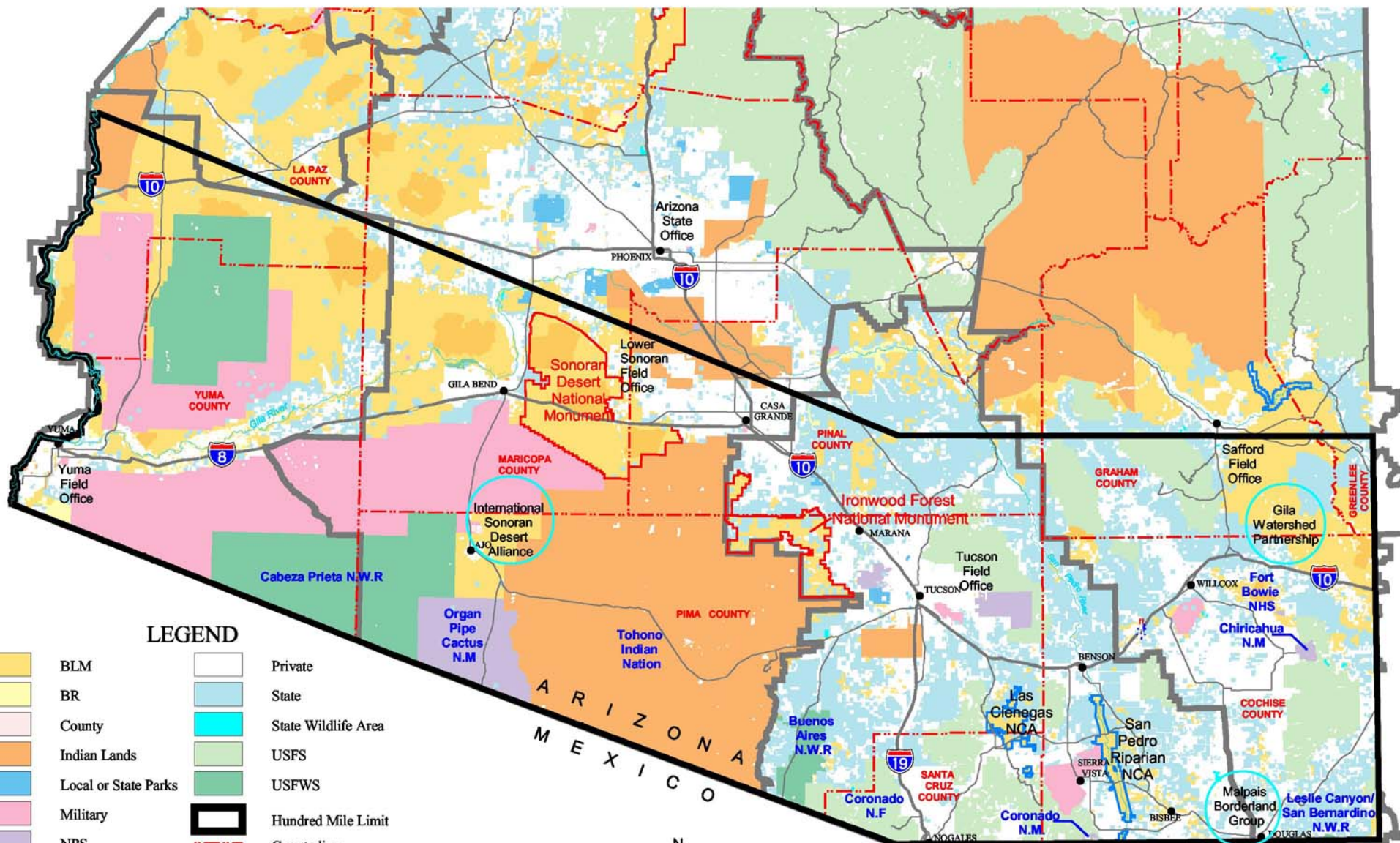
*“If we didn’t have this funding to gather resources to use YCOSA and SCAs to do the work, we would be buried in trash. This has been absolutely beneficial and remains extremely important.”* Bill Childress, Manager, San Pedro Riparian Natural Conservation Area, February 2006

List: End-of-Year Reports that have been made available by BLM:

Southeast Arizona 2003 Project to Mitigate Environmental Degradation Caused by Illegal Immigrants: End-of-Year Report

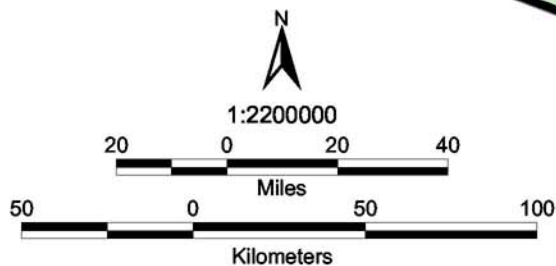
Southern Arizona Project to Address Public Land Degradation as a Result of Illegal Immigration 2004: End-of-Year Report

Southern Arizona Project to Mitigate Environmental Damages Resulting from Illegal Immigration: 2005 End-of-Year Report



## LEGEND

	BLM		Private
	BR		State
	County		State Wildlife Area
	Indian Lands		USFS
	Local or State Parks		USFWS
	Military		Hundred Mile Limit
	NPS		County line
	Non-governmental Organization Projects		BLM Field Office Boundaries



**Caution:**  
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24,000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have a plotting error of 1/16 to 1/8 inch.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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MAPPING SCIENCES SECTION

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## **THE SOUTHERN ARIZONA PROJECT**

To Mitigate Environmental Damages Resulting from Illegal Immigration and Smuggling  
March 2006

### **Illegal Immigrants**



### **Impacts from Illegal Immigration and Smuggling Activities:**



Litter at archaeological site



Litter near abandoned house



Human Waste



Bags waiting helicopter removal

Litter: Before



After clean up activities







IFNM: Trash on the way to the landfill



Tohono O'odham: typical trash load

Other Damage:



Trash in sensitive habitat



Graffiti



Campfire damaged cactus



Illegal Tracks



Illegal roads and abandoned vehicle



Repaired legal roadway



Illegal road before closure



After closure



Abandoned vehicle



Towing vehicle from National Monument



Abandoned Bicycles



Protection for sensitive riparian area

